



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

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CONVICTED DRUG DEALER SENTENCED TO 33 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR POSSESSION OF A FIREARM

TUCSON – Ishmael A. Smith, 31, of Tucson, was sentenced on May 22 to 33 months in federal prison by Chief U.S. District Judge John M. Roll. Smith pleaded guilty on February 12, admitting illegal possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

On September 17, 2006, U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives agents were monitoring illegal firearm activity in a gun show in Tucson, and uncovered a conspiracy to purchase and illegally transfer firearms to convicted felons, including Ishmael A. Smith. As a result of the subsequent investigation, agents responded to Smith's residence on October 13, 2006, and were given consent to search the home. An additional firearm was located in Smith's bedroom. The firearms attributed to Smith's possession include: (1) a Smith and Wesson, model SW40VE, .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol; (2) a Masterpiece Arms, model MPA10, .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol; and (3) a Springfield Armory model SA XD .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol. All of these firearms had affected interstate commerce in that they were previously transported into Arizona from another state or foreign country. Court records indicated that Smith was convicted of selling cocaine by Pinal County Superior Court of Arizona, case number CR98024771, on February 26, 2001. Two additional defendants involved in this conspiracy are currently pending sentencing.

Smith's prosecution is part of the District of Arizona's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), an illegal firearms enforcement program. The effectiveness of Project Safe Neighborhoods in Arizona is based on the ability of federal, state, and local agencies to cooperate in a unified offensive that is led by the U.S. Attorney. Through ongoing partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, the U.S. Attorney is implementing a series of strategies that are contoured to fit the specific gun crime problems throughout Arizona.

The City of Tucson is one of 25 cities nationally that have been targeted for a specialized enforcement initiative known as the Violent Crime Impact Teams (VCIT) Initiative. ATF is the lead federal law enforcement agency in this initiative, which uses an integrated federal, state and local law enforcement strategy to identify, disrupt, arrest and prosecute the most violent criminals in 25 U.S. cities. The VCIT concept was modeled after PSN successes, with additional ATF resources redirected from across the country to target specific areas that had an unacceptable level of violent crime, particularly firearms related homicides, as compared to the national average.

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The investigation in this case was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The prosecution was handled by Jennifer J. Maldonado, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-1822-001-TUC-JMR

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